

FLOREEN FEATURES



Greetings from the County Council!

As an At-large member and chair of the Council's Transportation and Environment Committee, a member of its Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee, and a Council representative to the Washington area Council of Governments, I've been immersed in transportation and community planning issues. But now it's budget time! As we work through the budget for the fiscal year ending in 2006, it is critical that I receive as much input as possible from residents.

During this budget, as before, I will be focusing on maintaining strong educational programs, improving our transportation network, increasing affordable housing, and strengthening public safety programs. These are the core elements of strong, vibrant neighborhoods. But communities also need accessible libraries, art venues, healthy small businesses, and attractive amenities such as bike trails and parkland. Residents have let me know they want more tree trimming and pothole repair, and these are also on my agenda.

I will be working to support all these services because they are the necessary elements for preserving our neighborhoods and protecting our outstanding quality of life.

You are my front liners - you know where the needs are. Please let me hear from you, by phone, 240-777-7959, by e-mail, Councilmember.Floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov, or by mail at 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Md. 20850.

NANCY

COMMUNITY INPUT

I would be honored if you would allow me to join your civic association or neighborhood meeting so I can hear directly your community's concerns. I am especially interested in hearing suggestions on what I can do to help your particular neighborhood be strong and function well. Please contact my staff at 240.777.7959 to let me know when I might join you.

FOREVER GREEN

Montgomery County has achieved the unbelievable. As a result of my request as to the extent of the County's green areas, the Planning Board compiled a report for the Council with remarkable statistics - 47 percent, or 148,000 acres, of the County's 318,000 total acres of land are in protected status - that's over 250 square miles of "Forever Green" open space. This includes over 47,000 acres of parkland and 91,000 acres in the agricultural preserve, plus more than 6,800 acres of forests and trees in residential developments. And we continue to add to our stock through the Legacy Open Space program and purchase of new parkland so that Montgomery

County will remain green for generations to come.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

I spent a good part of the fall working on a package of improvements to the County's Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program. Because of the meteoric increase in the cost of housing in our area, finding a reasonably priced home continues to be a crisis. The enhanced program will make it easier for MPDUs to be built, extends the period in which their price is affordable, and among other things, makes it extremely difficult and expensive to try and opt out of providing the units in a development. This will mean real progress toward creating and sustaining a strong affordable housing program. If your income is between \$40,000 and \$65,000, you may be eligible for the program. Call 240.777.3600 for further information.

TAXI SERVICES UPDATE

We had been hearing ongoing concerns and troubling anecdotes from residents, including seniors and people with disabilities, about cabs that show up late or not at all. Accordingly, the Transportation & Environment Committee held 7

worksessions last year on a comprehensive overhaul of the industry.

The result? A new law designed to improve customer service and encourage competition. The bill includes targets for on-time service, by which taxis will aim to arrive within 10 minutes of the scheduled time for pre-arranged service, and within 20 minutes for immediate service calls. Taxi companies are given incentives to meet these goals and penalized for failure to perform; specifics will be spelled out in future regulations.

The bill also allows the issuance of up to 70 new taxi licenses in 2005, the first time in 15 years that such licenses will be given out. New fleets will compete for licenses on a level playing field with existing companies.

Companies targeting service to underserved populations such as seniors, people with disabilities, and upcounty or rural areas of the County can receive special priority for licenses.

The bill will take effect April 1.

RECYCLING NEWS

Starting November 8th new large, covered rolling carts for mixed paper recycling are being distributed to homes throughout the

County. This Program, funded by the Council, will eventually distribute 200,000 carts by the end of July. Increasing recycling levels is critical, and we constantly look for initiatives to make it easier for residents to participate. Your cooperation is essential to our program's success.

RECYCLING REMINDERS

- Old phone books, magazines, catalogues, cereal boxes without the waxed paper, cardboard from paper towel rolls, office paper all go into the mixed paper carts.
- Remove all tops from bottles and plastic containers before recycling them in the blue boxes.

SENIOR STUDY

The County has many programs for seniors, but there wasn't a comprehensive description list to enable the Council to know whether we are duplicating services or neglecting a need. I requested and received a comprehensive study of all senior programs - who they serve, what they are accomplishing, and what areas may be lacking service. Now, when the Council reviews senior programs, we have essential information at hand to

make better, more cost-effective decisions.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

When e-mailing or writing Councilmembers be sure to:

Be accurate

Be polite

Be original – no form letters

Be clear and concise

THE WHEELS OF THE BUS GO ROUND AND ROUND

Improving transit opportunities is one of the most important goals for my first term on the Council. Last year's budget contained funding for many of the

programs I worked for to encourage more public transportation ridership - "Freewheeling Days" offering free bus rides along our most congested routes; the Kids Ride Free program; increasing the funding for Fare Share and Super Fare Share programs that enable employers to pay down the price of Metro for their employees; lowering prices for long-term bus passes; and funding purchase of many more buses.

Below you will find a lot of information about our wonderful local bus system - Ride On. I hope you will take advantage of it.

Ride On Schedules

[**Ride On Schedules**](#)-Where you can find schedules for 80 bus routes

Ride On operates

[**Ride On by Stations**](#)- 12 Metro stations in Montgomery County

[**Ride On by Areas**](#)-Look for Ride On routes in an area

[**Ride On System Map**](#)-Easy to find your Ride On routes

[**Find a Route by Streets**](#)-Search bus stop database for Ride On route(s) by street names

[**The Ride Guide**](#) - This service is provided by Metro

[**Trip Planner Help**](#)-Send us your location; we can help you to get there

[**Send a Feed Back**](#) -Help Ride On Service to get better every day

[**Ride On Subscription**](#)-Keep up with schedule changes and riders information

[**DPWT Home**](#)-This will take you to the Department of Public Works and Transportation home page

[**2005 Holiday Schedules**](#) -Official holidays and Ride On schedules